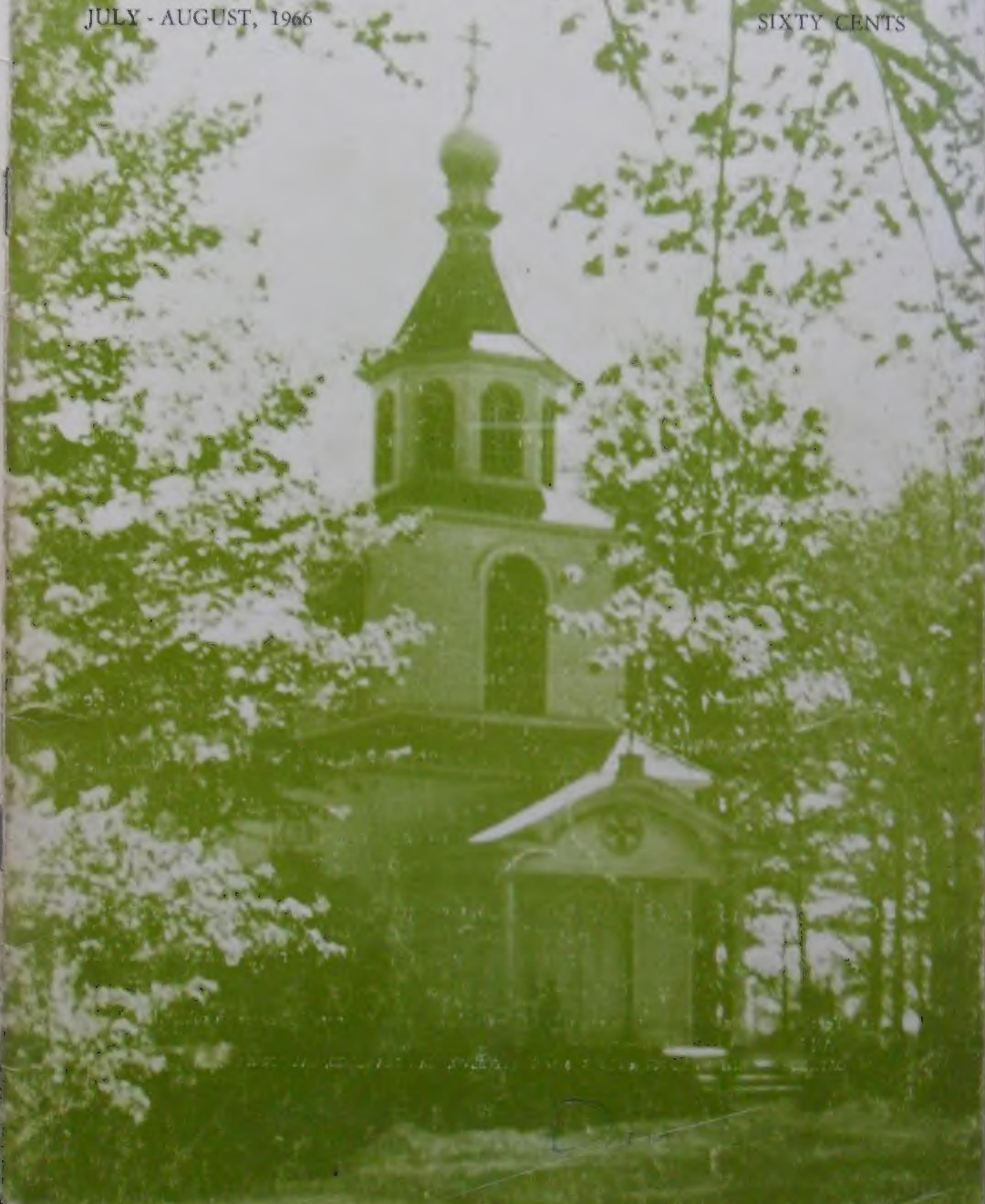


# THE ORTHODOX WORD

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# THE ORTHODOX WORD

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# THE SPIRITUAL TREASURE

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE in which we live is worldliness. Its agents, making use of the latest means of communication, flood the world. The sense of the ideal, the longing for ultimate happiness, love, and truth, which are inborn in man, when frustrated result either in crude materialism or spiritual sickness. Only God's truth is able to grant the needed fulfillment.

Yet the world is full of glimpses of God's revelation. Such holy thoughts, spiritual treasures, are man's constant companions. They are like grains of spiritual nourishment that bloom amidst the thorns in the world we see around us. And their function is to lead man away from worldliness to God.

*As a merchant from various lands gathers various goods, and brings them into his house and treasures them there, likewise a Christian can collect from the world soul-saving thoughts, and by collecting them in the treasury of his heart can form his soul.<sup>1</sup>*

This spiritual treasure gathered from the world, when given proper Orthodox growing conditions, produces a living contact with the Creator Himself. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, who so earnestly spent his whole life gathering this treasure, passed his legacy on to our generation. At the close of his earthly days he would restlessly spend nights on end walking in desolate places begging God to let him know what awaits those who are seriously concerned with their spiritual life. One night suddenly the whole sky was opened and the monastery was bathed in heavenly light and there was a voice saying, *See what is prepared for those who love God -- and he beheld the unutterable blessings of that other world for which the Christian lives.*

1. The opening motto of St. Tikhon Zadonsky's book, *A Spiritual Treasure Gathered from the World*, which, together with his other major work, *On True Christianity*, provides the basic concept and obligations of the Christian life for today.



ST. TIKHON OF ZADONSK

1724 - 1783

Commemorated August 13

Troparion, Tone 4

*Instructor of Orthodoxy, Teacher of piety, Preacher of repentance,  
Imitator of Chrysostom, Pastor most good,*

*New enlightener and wonderworker of Russia, Thou didst guard well thy flock,  
And by thy writings thou hast instructed us all.*

*Wherefore, adorned by the Chief Shepherd with a crown of incorruption,  
Pray to Him That our souls may be saved.*

# ST. TIKHON OF ZADONSK

## AND HIS SPIRITUAL LEGACY

*God cannot be understood without God.*  
St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

**A**HOLY FATHER of relatively recent times, -- a great saint, a seer of God's hidden mysteries -- St. Tikhon was a humble bishop living in retirement in a monastery near the river Don. He was known to be fond of simple people and was the author of several books which became quite popular. Externally he was rather handsome, with an air of quiet melancholy sadness. In his writings he rarely spoke of the exuberant paschal joy so typical of Russian spirituality. For this reason he has been erroneously categorized by some one-sided historians as an 18th-century Westernizing mystic.

A keen Orthodox observer, however, will detect in the whole image of St. Tikhon, as well as in all his writings, a fragrance of paschal clarity, simplicity, and warmth -- which is precisely the traditional Orthodox sanctity, Russian as well as Byzantine. He was "a living expression of Orthodoxy at its best"<sup>1</sup> and is a living spiritual guide for Orthodox believers to this day. St. Tikhon's holy personality, his pastoral zeal, his penetrative spirituality, have inspired and educated whole generations of authentic Orthodox, and today more than ever he stands out as an inspirer of true Orthodoxy and a merciless condemner of those who deviate from it.

St. Tikhon's country was the beautiful Valday Lake region near Novgorod with its ancient cathedrals, monasteries, and miraculous icons; he was a true son of the rich patriarchal tradition of Novgorod the Great. Born of an extremely poor family, he lived constantly in fear of

1. An evaluation by his best biographer in English, Nadejda Gorodetzky: *Saint Tikhon Zadonsky, Inspirer of Dostoyevsky*, London, SPCK, 1951. She also writes: "The late N. A. Berdyaev knew of my intention to write on St. Tikhon. In a letter he advised me to stress this link of Tikhon with the pietists and humanitarian spirit of the 18th century. This does not seem possible to me... To speak of an influence would seem to us an exaggeration" (p. 28).

## THE ORTHODOX WORD

God, which nurtured in him one virtue after another. He received the best theological education for that time, and upon completing it became a seminary instructor.

There were earlier signs of his being called to a high spiritual life, but his final decision to become a monk was prompted by God when he was in his early thirties. He described it once in his own words:

"This occurred before I became a monk. When I was a teacher, I already had the habit of spending the night without sleep, but either reading spiritual books or thinking of matters beneficial to the soul. But I tell you this secretly, and you must be silent about it. One night in the month of May it was very beautiful, quiet, and light. I stepped out of my cell onto my porch, which faced north, and stood there thinking of eternal blessings. Suddenly the skies unfolded, and there was such shining and light as the mortal tongue cannot utter nor the mind of man comprehend; but it was for only a short moment, and again the sky became as before. After that wonderful vision I formed a stronger desire for the secluded life. Long afterwards I sensed a deep contentment and was exalted in my mind; and even now, as I recall it, I experience in my heart that joy and happiness." This paschal experience became the keynote of his whole life and his significance.<sup>1</sup>

The young Tikhon rose rapidly in the Church hierarchy. At the close of 1759 he became rector of a seminary in Tver. Housed in the Otroch Monastery, it was very beautifully situated near a birch grove, where he dreamed to build himself a small cell for his reclusion. In this atmosphere he read much: the Holy Scriptures, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Makarios the Great. The Psalter and New Testament he knew by heart. Chrysostom determined his future pastoral zeal, for which he became known as "the Russian Chrysostom," while St. Makarios shaped his Orthodox orientation, his philosophy of life, which prompted his literary activity.

On Easter of 1761 Tikhon served the Divine Liturgy with the bishop of Tver Cathedral. During the singing of the Cherubim Hymn, when the bishop, standing by the altar of preparation, was taking out pieces of bread for the living, Tikhon, as was customary, approached him

1. It is interesting to note that a recent miracle of St. Tikhon has also a paschal reference. In 1962, in a church in San Francisco dedicated to the Resurrection of Christ, an icon of St. Tikhon was miraculously renewed, the Saint thus showing his special favor to the V. Rev. Philaret Astrahansky, who had earlier been forced to leave a church dedicated to St. Tikhon. (The phenomena of renewed icons will be treated in considerable detail in a future issue of *The Orthodox Word*.)



Another portrait of St. Tikhon

saying, "Remember me, holy Vladika." The bishop, instead of saying "Archimandrite Tikhon" said "Bishop Tikhon." Noticing his mistake, the bishop smiled and said: "God grant you to be a bishop." That very same Easter Day the ruling bishops of the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg were selecting candidates for a bishop in Novgorod. There were seven candidates. Bishop Epiphany of Smolensk asked to add another name, that of St. Tikhon. "He is still young," said Metropolitan Dimitry, but nevertheless added his name. Three times the ballots were drawn, and



Saint Metrophan, Bishop of Voronezh

stopped in Moscow for a meeting with the Empress. But upon arriving he discovered that he was to attend the final trial and the evil ceremony of the unjust defrocking of Metropolitan Arseny Matsievich of Rostov, his own Metropolitan. He had been a leading figure among those who opposed Catherine's secularization of Church property, which was a blow directed against monasticism and its influence. The experience was shocking. The righteous man foretold horrible deaths to the hierarchs as they defrocked him, and these occurred as foretold. The mob outside was shouting and restless; the adjacent church fell into ruins by itself soon after the event. Metropolitan Arseny himself was put into prison, where he later died.

Tikhon left Moscow a sick man. He felt trapped. The 18th-century Western ideas, from the time of Peter the Great, had been infiltrating Holy Russia, and his sensitive soul could not but feel sorrow, seeing how dangerous they were to the Orthodox orientation. Now he *saw* that the

three times the name of St. Tikhon was drawn. "Evidently God wants him to be a bishop," said the Metropolitan. "I was planning to appoint him elsewhere." The same year Tikhon became a bishop in Novgorod.

In 1763, in connection with the opening of a new diocese in Voronezh, Catherine II appointed him bishop there; and from that time begin his great pastoral labors.

The peaceful Novgorod years came to an end. St. Tikhon departed full of strength for the new endeavor in a diocese that was in need of reformation. On the way, as he had been instructed, he

## ST. TIKHON OF ZADONSK

clergy was helpless. Having arrived in Voronezh, a totally unorganized and depraved town, he wrote a letter of resignation on the grounds of his poor health.

But Voronezh was full of wonderful living testimony of a miracle-worker whose remains the whole town cherished. Its first bishop, Metrophan, whose quarters Tikhon occupied, fell out of favor with Tsar Peter I when he stood firm against the Western statues of mythological figures with which Peter decorated his palace. But Peter's wrath was shattered when the bells of the entire town rang in mourning of Metrophan, who had prepared to die at Peter's command rather than allow the pagan statues amidst his flock; and the statues were torn down and destroyed.

And Tikhon resolved to follow his God-given obedience: to crucify himself for his flock, but to see his flock Orthodox in spite of the hindrance of the evil times, of which he was fully aware. He energetically undertook enormous pastoral labors, both by establishing various institutions and by personally pleading with his flock to lead a Christian life. He opened a seminary, instituted special sermons, cared for the poor, the sick, the afflicted. On Easter morning, dressed as a simple monk, he visited prisons to give the Easter greeting and kiss to the most hardened convicts. When he found out about an annual pagan celebration held on the first day of the Lent of Sts. Peter and Paul, he rushed in a carriage right into the midst of the drunken celebration, which was held outdoors. Standing in the carriage he delivered a flaming sermon on the meaning of lent and the evil of such indecent celebrations. He demanded that the celebration stop at once -- and it did. One girl was so shocked that she thought the end of the world had come, and she ran from the spot right to a convent. There she became a nun with the name Taisia and for many years led a life so worthy that when she died, during Easter Week, another nun saw a dream in which a boat with St. Tikhon and St. Metrophan in glowing vestments sailed through the archway of the flooded convent and the two saints came to Taisia's cell and took her with them, sailing away into the dark.

But in spite of St. Tikhon's immense pastoral labors and zeal, people did not change. So he abandoned his bishop's see and went into retirement, thus fulfilling the advice of his younger contemporary, St. Seraphim of Sarov: *My joy, acquire the spirit of peace (the Holy Spirit) and thousands around you will be saved.* And literally thousands of visitors began to

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flock to the little cabin he and his friend Fr. Metrophan occupied outside the walls of the Zadonsk Monastery. They received and consoled the afflicted. Numbers of ascetics, both monastic and lay, arose under his influence. He had contact with Mt. Athos and corresponded with Sarov. St. Tikhon, as a starets, was a prefiguration of the later staretsi of Optina.<sup>1</sup>

The inward man in St. Tikhon was richly endowed with spiritual experience and blessings, as far as we can judge from the memoirs of his cell attendants. Although even they do not portray him fully, they do shed light on the intensity of his inward spiritual warfare with the world, with himself, and with the devil. He had the gift of foretelling; he had visions and heavenly signs; he knew the day on which he would die. In the consciousness of the simple people he was already glorified as a saint during his lifetime.

But above all he had an exuberant love in his heart, and this was evident in everything connected with him. We in our sinfulness can hardly imagine how his love radiated when he visited the sick, the poor, the feeble, or when he came in contact with children (whom he dearly loved and taught to recite the Jesus Prayer), or when he would spend the night in his cell without sleep, weeping, chanting, and making prostrations on the hard wooden floor.

The monastery administration, disturbed by his unusual ways, did not understand him. They treated him disrespectfully and harshly. Even when he was on his death-bed they did not bother to fulfill his last wish -- to receive Holy Communion.

At the end of his life St. Tikhon received a special revelation about the future of the world which could only underline the necessity for the spiritual awareness which he always preached. This revelation, described by the Saint's cell-attendant, Ivan Ethemov, occurred in the very year when St. Seraphim entered Sarov Monastery and the blessed Starets Paissy Velichkovsky moved his brotherhood to Nyamets, in Moldavia. These two events were determining factors not only for the future greatness of these holy men, but also for the whole movement of spiritual reawakening in the 19th century which has yet to say its last word for our own century.

1. The great Abbot of Optina, *Skhima-Archimandrite Moses*, who instituted Starets Paissy Velichkovsky's system of spiritual direction by staretsi, was well-acquainted with one of St. Tikhon's students, Fr. Basil Kishkin, and had great veneration for the Saint. A day before his death Fr. Moses requested his cell-attendants to place an icon of St. Tikhon before him -- in front of which, and on St. Tikhon's name's day, he died.



Zadonsk Monastery, where St. Tikhon lived in retirement, as it appeared in 1861, the year of his canonization.

"In 1778 in a light sleep he was granted this vision: while meditating he saw the Mother of God on the clouds while Sts. Peter and Paul stood nearby. He himself was kneeling before Her, begging for the continuation of God's mercy for the whole world. And he heard St. Paul with a loud voice calling out these words: *When they shall say, Peace and safety, then shall sudden destruction come upon them* (I Thes. 5:3). From fear of the Apostle's voice he rose and saw that he was trembling and in tears."

It is doubtless we today who are living in the time when the words of this prophecy are to be fulfilled. And St. Tikhon's clear-sightedness has provided us, who live two hundred years after him, with a sound protection in an age of universal apostasy.

St. Tikhon died silently amidst his devoted friends. With the printing of his works his popularity grew and his influence spread, while his holy relics produced a flow of miracles leading, in 1861, to his canonization.

*Gleb Podmoshensky.*

GREAT ORTHODOX HIERARCHS  
OF THE 19TH & 20TH CENTURIES

## BISHOP THEOPHAN,



BISHOP THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE

1815 - 1891

*An introduction to one of the most important Orthodox literary figures of the 19th century: translator of the Philokalia, and author of valuable works of spiritual guidance based on the Holy Fathers and his own profound spiritual experience.*

# THE RECLUSE OF VYSHA

By E. SUMAROKOV<sup>1</sup>

## I

**T**HE BISHOP THEOPHAN belongs an immense significance in the history of the moral development of Russian society. That thirst for complete union with God which led him into reclusion did not deprive the world and his own people of his help. Even from his remote reclusion he was a great public figure, supporting and directing thousands of people and their spiritual life.

Acquiring great spiritual experience by means of complete self-renunciation and strict daily asceticism, Bp. Theophan generously shared with all who had need of it the treasures of his spiritual experience. No one who appealed to him in writing was denied advice. But he exerted a much wider influence by means of his books. How to live a Christian life; how, amidst the slough of temptations, misfortunes, weaknesses, the weight of our sinful habits, not to fall into despair; how to desire salvation for oneself and begin the work of moral perfection; how to do battle on this path step by step, and to enter ever more deeply into the saving enclosure of the Church: it is of this that the books of Bp. Theophan speak.

In this connection he resembles the great laborer on the field of the spiritual rebirth of the Russian people, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, who wrote so much, so well, and so penetratingly on the salvation of the human soul amid the dangers of this sinful world.

Behind all the spiritual wisdom that is expressed in his books stands the pure image of a great ascetic. Every word of Bp. Theophan produces all the stronger an impression for having been imprinted by his life. When he repeats: "Do not gravitate to the earth. All is corruptible; only the happiness beyond the grave is eternal, unchanging, true, and this happiness depends upon how we spend this life of ours!" -- then as a living example of this correct view of the world and the destiny of the soul stand his own self denial, his reclusion, his desire to take nothing from life but a striving toward God.

1. From *Lectures on the History of the Russian Church*, Harbin, 1945, vol. 2.

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### II

Bp. Theophan was called in the world George Vasilievich Govorov and he was born on Jan. 10, 1815, in a village near Orel, where his father was a priest. Thus from the first impressions of his youth he lived with the Church. He studied first in the theological preparatory school in the city of Liven, then in the Orel Seminary. However difficult the severe, sometimes cruel conditions of the theological school were at that time, it gave its sons a strong mental temper.

From 1837 to 1841 he continued his education in the Kiev Theological Academy. One may confidently say that the young student often went to the caves of the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra, and amid these recollections there could have been formed in him the resolution to leave the world. Even before finishing the course he was tonsured a monk.

After his tonsure Theophan, together with other newly-tonsured monks, went off to the Lavra, to the well known Father Partheny. The Starcts told them: "You, learned monks who have taken various rules upon yourselves, remember that one thing is most necessary of all: to pray and to pray unceasingly in your mind and heart to God."

Having finished the course with a master's degree, Hieromonk Theophan was assigned as temporary rector of the Kiev-Sofia Theological School; later he was rector of the Novgorod Seminary and a professor and aid to the supervisor in the Petersburg Theological Academy.

This purely scholarly work did not satisfy him, and he petitioned to be discharged from academic service. He was assigned as a member of the Russian Mission in Jerusalem; then, raised to the rank of archimandrite, he was assigned as rector of the Olonetsky Seminary. He was soon transferred to Constantinople as chief priest of the embassy church, then called to Petersburg to be rector of the Theological Academy and supervisor of religious instruction in the secular schools of the capital.

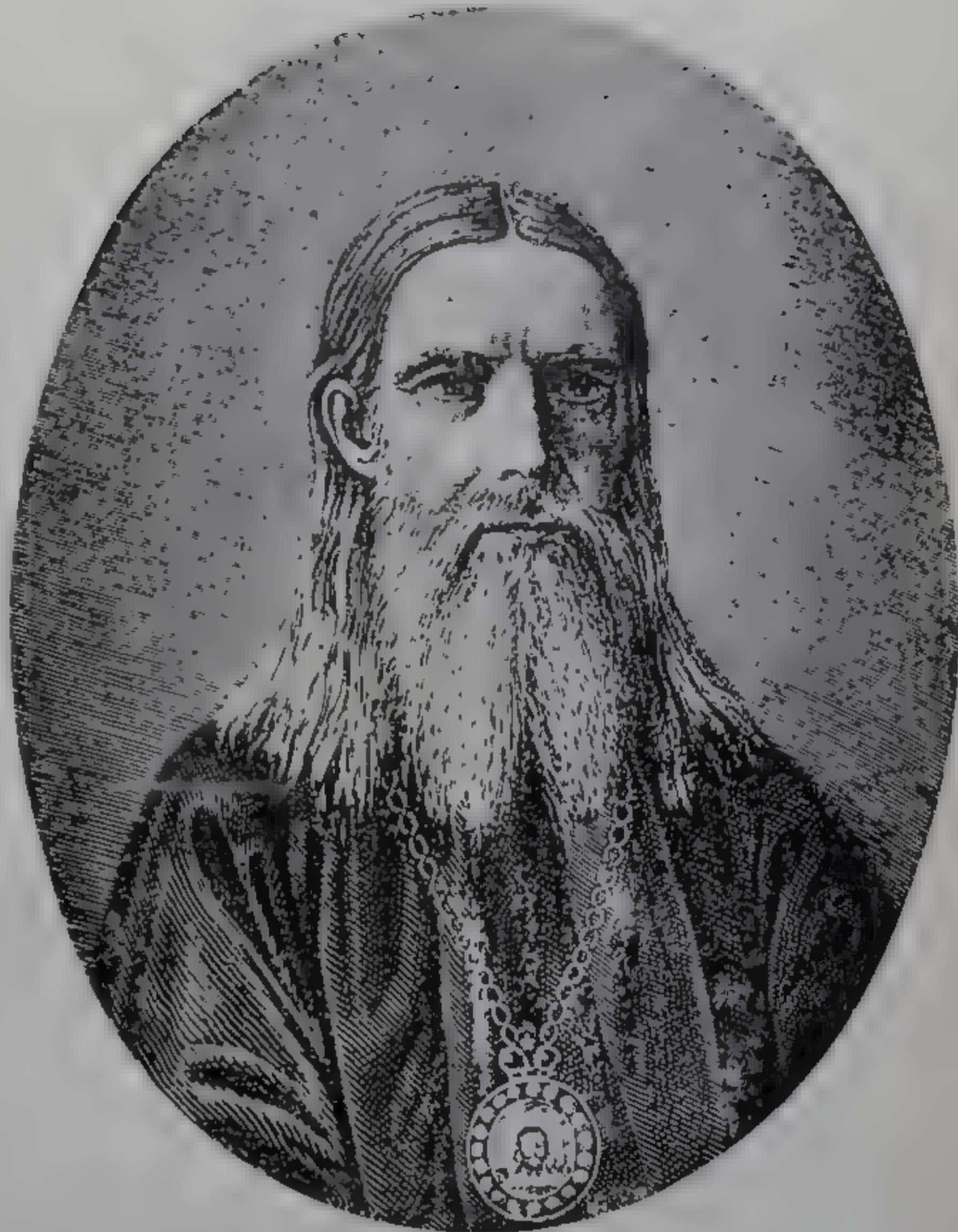
On May 9, 1859, he was consecrated bishop for Tambov. Here he established a diocesan school for girls. During his stay in the Tambov See, Bp. Theophan came to love the isolated Vysha Hermitage. In the summer of 1863 he was transferred to Vladimir, where he served for three years. Here too he opened a diocesan school for girls. He served in church often, travelled much throughout the diocese, preached constantly, restored churches, and wholeheartedly lived with his flock, sharing with them both joy and sorrow.

### III

In 1861 Bp. Theophan was present at the opening of the relics of St. Tikhon Zadonsky. This event must have produced a very strong impression on him, since he had so much in common with St. Tikhon. He had so loved St. Tikhon from his very childhood, had always thought of him with such enthusiasm, that when the time came for the canonization of this great teacher and protector of the people, Bp. Theophan's joy was inexpressible.

In 1866 Bp. Theophan petitioned to be relieved as Bishop of Vladimir and was appointed head of the Vysha Hermitage, and soon, at a new petition of his, he was freed even of this duty.

What reasons induced Bp. Theophan, full of strength, to leave his diocese and retire into solitude? Various are the characters and gifts of men. It was difficult for him in the midst of the world and those demands to which one must yield as a consequence of human corruption. His unlimited goodness of heart, a meekness like that of a dove, his trust of people and indulgence of them -- all this indicated that it was not for him to live amidst the irreconcilable quarrels of vain worldly life. It was very difficult for him to be a leader, especially in such an important position as that of bishop. His trust could be abused; he could never give necessary reprimands. Besides this, he felt the call to devote all his energies to spiritual writing. As for himself personally, he wished to give up all his thoughts to God alone, Whom he loved so absolutely. He desired that nothing might disturb the complete communion with God that



Bishop Theophan in retirement

## THE ORTHODOX WORD

was so dear to him. And he left the world to be alone with God.

There was an example that Bp. Theophan kept constantly before his eyes: St. Tikhon, to whom he had been so drawn from his youth, and who also, leaving one diocese, became a spiritual benefactor of the whole Russian people.

To be sure, in retiring from his diocese Bp. Theophan more than anything else thought about the salvation of his own soul by means of complete dedication of every thought and breath to God. But the word of Christ was realized in him. In reclusion, invisible to people, he became a public figure of enormous magnitude. He sought only the Kingdom of God, and his great significance for the world was added to him.

On Sunday, July 2, 1866, the Bishop bade farewell to his flock. After serving the Liturgy, the Bishop gave his last sermon amidst a death-like silence, in which could be heard only an occasional quiet weeping. And there began 28 years of a solitary, full life of uninterrupted labors.

### IV

The first six years the Bishop went to all services and to the early Liturgy. In church he stood without moving, without leaning, with eyes closed so as not to be distracted. On feast days he usually officiated.

Beginning in 1872, however, he discontinued all intercourse with people except for the chief priest and his confessor. He went no longer to the monastery church, but built with his own hands in his chambers a small church dedicated to the Baptism of the Lord. For the first ten years he served the Liturgy in this church every Sunday and feast day, and for the next eleven years every day. He served completely alone, sometimes in silence, but sometimes singing.

He seemed to be no longer a man, but an angel with a childlike meekness and gentleness. When people came to him on business, he said what was necessary and plunged back into prayer. He ate only enough so as not to ruin his health. Everything that he received he sent by mail to the poor, leaving himself only enough to buy necessary books. From his publications, which were quickly distributed, he received nothing, hoping only that they might be sold as cheaply as possible. In the rare moments when he was free from prayer, reading, or writing, he occupied himself with manual labor. He painted excellent icons and was skilled in woodcarving and the locksmith's trade.

## BISHOP THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE

Every day Bp. Theophan received from twenty to forty letters, and he answered them all. With extraordinary sensitivity he penetrated to the spiritual situation of the writer and warmly, clearly, and in detail replied to this confession of a distressed soul.

His letters, which appeared in print after his death, strike one by their freshness, sensitivity, depth and boldness of feeling, simplicity, warm concern, cordiality.

And thus he lived, directing from his reclusion believers who came to him from afar thirsting for salvation.

A few words should be said on the books of Bp. Theophan. On everything he spoke from experience and systematically, as a man who had himself passed through the stages of spiritual development on which he wanted to lead others. His works include:

On moral theology *Letters on the Spiritual Life*; *Letters on the Christian Life*; *Miscellaneous Letters on Faith and Life*; *What the Spiritual Life Is and How to Dispose Oneself for it*; *The Path to Salvation*; *On Repentance, Communion, and Amendment of Life*; *On Prayer and Sobriety*.

Commentaries on Holy Scripture: *Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (all, with the exception of *Hebrews*); *Commentaries on Psalms 33, 118*.

Translations: *The Philokalia*, in five volumes; *The Ancient Monastic Statutes*; *Unseen Warfare*; *The Sermons of St. Simeon the New Theologian*.

### V

The life of Bp. Theophan passed unseen by the world, and death too came to him in solitude. In his last years his vision began to fail, but he did not abandon his constant work, continuing to portion his time in the same strict fashion as always. Evenings his cell attendant prepared everything for the celebration of the Liturgy. After the Liturgy the Bishop asked for tea by a knock on the wall. At one o'clock he ate -- on non-fast days an egg and a glass of milk. At four o'clock he had tea, and after that no more food for the day.

Beginning January 1, 1891, there were several irregularities in his schedule. On January 6, at 4:30 in the afternoon, his cell-attendant, noting the Bishop's weakness during these days (although he nonetheless continued to write after noon), looked into his room. The Bishop lay on the bed lifeless. His left arm rested on his breast and his right arm was folded as if for a bishop's blessing.

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For three days the body remained in the small church in his cell, and for three days it was in the cathedral -- and there was no corruption. When he was vested in his bishop's vestments, the face of the dead man was brightened by a joyful smile. Bp. Theophan died at the age of 79. He was buried in the unheated Kazan Cathedral.

In Bp. Theophan's cell everything was extremely simple, even meager. The walls were bare, the furniture old: a cupboard worth a ruble, a two-ruble chest, an old table, an old reading stand, an iron folding bed, sofas of birch wood with hard seats. There was a trunk with instruments for lathe-work, carpentry, book-binding; photographic equipment, a bench for sawing, a joiner's bench. There was a gray cotton undercassock, a wooden panagia, a wooden pectoral cross, a telescope, a microscope, an anatomical and a geographical atlas.

And then the books -- books without number, without end, in Russian, Slavonic, Greek, French, German, and English. Among them were: a complete collection of the Holy Fathers; a theological encyclopedia in French in 150 volumes; Soloviev's History of Russia; Schlosser's Universal History; the works of the philosophers Hegel, Fichte, Jacobi, and others; works on natural history by Humboldt, Darwin, Fichta, and others. One calls to mind his words: "It is good to understand the structure of plants, of animals, especially of man, and the laws of life; in them is revealed the wisdom of God, which is great in everything."

In addition there were an immense number of icons, a picture of St. Seraphim of Sarov,<sup>1</sup> and many icons painted by the Bishop himself.

The great hierarch is hidden from us in body, but his spirit lives in the divinely wise printed works which he left. In the person of Bp. Theophan, as Archbp. Nikander of Vilna has said, we have a universal Christian teacher, even though he did not speak; a public figure, though in reclusion; a preacher of the Church who was heard everywhere, even though in his last years he appeared in no Church see; a missionary-convictor of sectarian errors, even though he did not step out onto the field that was open to missionary activity; a bright lamp of Christ's teaching for Orthodox people, even though he concealed himself from the people's gaze; possessing scarcely a sufficiency of earthly goods, yet enriching all with the spiritual wealth of his teaching; seeking no temporal, earthly glory, yet glorified now both by people and by theological science, as well as by various institutions.

1. Before his canonization, which occurred in 1903 (*trans. note*).

THE ORTHODOX SPIRITUAL LIFE

# THE PATH TO SALVATION

By BISHOP THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE

*The following essay, a short but typical example of Bishop Theophan's writing, is the Foreword to his major work, The Path to Salvation, and constitutes an outline, by a highly qualified and experienced authority, of the very phenomenon of the spiritual life: its nature, its dangers, its goal.*

**T**IS POSSIBLE to describe the feelings and inclinations which a Christian must have, but this is very far from being all that is demanded for the ordering of one's salvation. The important thing for us is a real life in the spirit of Christ. But just touch on this, and how many perplexities are uncovered, how many guideposts are necessary, as a result, almost at every step!

True, one may know man's final goal: communion with God; and one may describe the path to it: faith, and walking in the commandments, with the aid of Divine grace. One need only say in addition: Here is the path -- start walking!

This is easily said; but how to do it? For the most part the very desire to walk is lacking. The soul, attracted by some passion or other, stubbornly repulses every compelling force and every call; the eyes turn away from God and do not want to look at Him. The law of Christ is not to one's liking; there is no disposition even to listen to it. One may ask, how does one reach the point when the desire is born to walk toward God on the path of Christ? What does one do so that the law will imprint itself on the heart, and man, acting according to this law, will act as if from himself, unconstrained; so that this law will not lie on him, but will as it were proceed from him?

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But suppose someone has turned toward God, suppose he has come to love His law; is the very going toward God, the very walking on the path of Christ's law, already necessary and will it be successful merely because we desire it to be? No. Besides the desire one must also have the strength and knowledge to act; one must have active wisdom. Whoever enters on the true path of pleasing God, or who begins with the aid of grace to strive toward God on the path of Christ's law, will inevitably be threatened by the danger of losing his way at the crossroads, of going astray and perishing, imagining himself saved. These crossroads are unavoidable because of the sinful inclination and disorder of one's faculties, which are capable of presenting things in a false light -- to deceive and destroy a man. To this is joined the flattery of Satan, who is reluctant to be separated from his victims and, when someone from his domain goes to the light of Christ, pursues him and sets every manner of net in order to catch him again; and quite often he indeed catches him. Consequently it is necessary for someone who already has the desire to walk on the indicated path to the Lord to be shown in addition all the deviations that are possible on this path, so that the traveller may be warned in advance about this, may see the dangers that are to be encountered, and may know how to avoid them.

These general considerations which are unavoidable to all on the path of salvation render indispensable certain guiding rules of the Christian life by which it should be determined: how to attain to the saving desire for communion with God and the zeal to remain in it, and how to reach God without misfortune amidst all the crossroads that may be met on this path at every step -- in other words, how to begin to live the Christian life and how, having begun, to perfect oneself in it.

The sowing and development of the Christian life are different in essence from the sowing and development of natural life, owing to the special character of the Christian life and its relation to our nature. A man is not born a Christian, but becomes such after birth. The seed of Christ falls on the soil of a heart that is already beating. But since the naturally-born man is injured and opposed by the demand of Christianity, -- while in a plant, for example, the beginning of life is the stirring of a sprout in the seed, an awakening of as it were dormant powers -- the beginning of a true Christian life in a man is a kind of re-creation, an endowing of new powers, of new life. Further, suppose that Christianity is received as a law, *i.e.*, the resolution is made to live a Christian life:

## THE PATH TO SALVATION

this seed of life (this resolution) is not surrounded in a man by elements favorable to him, and besides this the whole man, his body and soul, remain unadapted to the new life, unsubmissive to the yoke of Christ. Therefore from this moment begins in a man a labor of sweat -- to educate his whole self, all his faculties, according to the Christian standard. This is why, while growth in plants, for example, is a gradual development of faculties, easy, unconstrained -- in a Christian it is a battle with oneself involving much labor, intense and sorrowful, and he must dispose his faculties for something for which they have no inclination: like a soldier, he must take every step of land, even his own, from his enemies by means of warfare, with the double-edged sword of forcing himself and opposing himself. Finally, after long labors and exertions, the Christian principles appear victorious, reigning without opposition; they penetrate the whole composition of human nature, dislodging from it demands and inclinations hostile to themselves, and place it in a state of passionlessness and purity, making it worthy of the blessedness of the pure in heart -- to see God in themselves in sincerest communion with Him.

Such is the place in us of the Christian life. This life has three stages which may be called: 1. turning to God; 2. purification or self-amendment; 3. sanctification. In the first stage a man turns from darkness to light, from the domain of Satan to God; in the second, he cleanses the chamber of his heart from every impurity, in order to receive Christ the Lord Who is coming to him; in the third, the Lord comes, takes up His abode in his heart, and communes with him. This is the state of blessed communion with God -- the goal of all labors and ascetic endeavors.

To describe all this and determine its laws will mean -- to indicate *the path to salvation...*

# THE SELF-LIQUIDATION OF CHRISTIANITY

*The "Death of God" as a Sign of the Times*

HE STRIKING PHRASE, "God is dead," is the poetical expression of modern unbelief. Much is expressed in this phrase that is not to be found in the more prosaic expressions of modern atheism and agnosticism. A vivid contrast is established between a previous age when men believed in God and based their life and institutions upon Him, and a new age for whose inhabitants, supposedly, this once all-illuminating sun has been blotted out, and life and society must be given a new orientation.

The phrase, itself apparently coined by Nietzsche almost a century ago, was for long used to express the views of a comparatively few enemies of Christianity, chiefly "existentialists"; but recently it has caused controversy by being accepted in radical Protestant circles, and now it has become a concern of common journalism and the mass media. Clearly a responsive chord has been struck in Western society at large; the public interest in the "death of God" has made this phenomenon one of the signs of the times.

To understand what this sign means, one must know its historical context. By its very nature it is a negation -- a reaction against the other-worldly Christian world view which emphasizes asceticism and the "unseen warfare" against the devil and the world in order to obtain eternal joy through communion with God in the Kingdom of Heaven. The founders of the new philosophy declared the Christian God "dead" and proclaimed man a god in His place. This view is merely the latest stage of the modern battle against Christianity which has resulted today in the virtually universal triumph of unbelief.

The contemporary controversy, however, centers about a new and unusual phenomenon: it is now "Christians" who are the unbelievers. Yet in a sense this too is the logical culmination of an historical process that began in the West with the schism of the Church of Rome. Separated for over nine centuries from the Church of Christ, Western Christendom has possessed only a steadily-evaporating residue of the genuine Christianity preserved by Holy Orthodoxy. Today the process is nearly

## ORTHODOXY AND MODERN THOUGHT

complete, and large numbers of Catholics and Protestants are hardly to be distinguished from unbelievers; and if they still call themselves "Christians," it can only be because for them Christianity itself has been turned into its opposite: worldly unbelief. One may observe in this what one Orthodox thinker has called "the self liquidation of Christianity": Christianity undermined from within by its own representatives who demand that it conform itself entirely to the world.

A strange parallel to this new "theology" has become common of late in the "liturgical" life of the West. Widespread publicity was given earlier this year to a "rock-and-roll" service in the Old South Church in Boston, in which teenagers were allowed to dance in the aisles of the church to the accompaniment of raucous popular music. In Catholic churches "jazz masses" become more and more frequent. The ostensible intention of those responsible for these phenomena is the same as that of the new radical "theologians": to make religion more "real" to contemporary men. They thereby admit what is obvious to Orthodox observers: that religious life is largely dead in Western Christendom; but they unwittingly reveal even more: unable to distinguish between church and dancehall, between Christ and the world, they reveal that God is dead in their own hearts and only worldly excitement is capable of evoking a response in themselves and their "post-Christian" flocks.

To what does all this, finally, point? Our Lord, when prophesying of the advent of Antichrist, spoke of *the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place* (St. Matt. 24: 15); and St. Paul speaks of the very enemy of God sitting in God's temple and being worshipped in place of God (II Thes. 2: 4) -- and this will occur, according to St. John Chrysostom, "in every church." Does not this "Christian atheism," do not these blasphemous "worship services," does not the acceptance of even the most unseemly and vulgar manifestations in what men still consider holy places, already prepare the way for this end and give one even a foretaste of it?

For Western Christendom God is indeed dead, and its leaders only prepare for the advent of the enemy of God, Antichrist. But Orthodox Christians know the living God and dwell within the saving enclosure of His True Church. It is here, in faithful and fervent following of the unchanging Orthodox path -- and not in the dazzling "ecumenical" union with the new infidels that is pursued by Orthodox modernists -- that our salvation is to be found.

*Eugene Rose.*

## THE ICONS OF THE GREAT FEASTS

# THE DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD AUGUST 15

By S. V. BULGAKOV<sup>1</sup>

*In giving birth Thou didst preserve Thy virginity,  
and in Thy Dormition Thou didst not forsake the  
world, O Mother of God. Thou didst pass on to  
life, since Thou art the Mother of Life, and by  
Thy prayers Thou savest our souls from death.*

Troparion of the Feast, Tone 1

**A**FTER THE ASCENSION into heaven of Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Virgin, being, in accordance with the testament of Her Son, in the care of St. John (St. John 19: 26-27), remained constantly in the ascetic labor of fasting and prayer and with the lively desire of beholding Her Son sitting at the right hand of God. According to the ordering of Divine Providence, the Most Holy Mother of God, *having come from mortal loins, had a death conformable to nature* for the consolation of all people, so that they too might not fear to proceed to heaven by the same gates of death through which the Queen of Heaven passed, sharing the lot of the earth-born. "It was necessary," says St. John Damascene, "that that which was composed of earth should return to earth and only then pass to heaven, having embraced on earth a most pure life through banishment of the flesh; it was necessary that the body should be purified through death, as gold through fire, from everything dark and from the coarse burden of filth, and should rise from the grave uncorrupted, pure, and illumined by the light of immortality."

The day of the death of the Most Holy Mother of God was revealed to Her by the Lord three days beforehand through the Archangel

1. From his *Manual for Orthodox Priests* (*Nastolnaya Kniga*), Kharkov, 1900. The author, a teacher at the Kharkov Seminary at the end of the last century, should not be confused with the later Fr. S. N. Bulgakov, whose heretical teachings were condemned by the Church.



The traditional icon of the Dormition. The couch is surrounded by the mourning Apostles, St. Peter (with censer) and St. Paul in front. The icon is the work of the contemporary master iconographer, Archimandrite Cyprian, founder of the icon-painting shop at Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York.

Gabriel. Her decease was marked by miracles of which the holy Church sings. On that day the Apostles were transported on the clouds from various lands and placed in Jerusalem. *It was fitting that the eyewitnesses and servants of the Word should see the dormition of His Mother according to the flesh.*

Preparing Herself for departure to the heavenly world, the Most Holy Virgin ordered that Her chamber and bed be adorned, incense be burned, and candles lit. She commanded that Her two garments and other things which She had made be given to the widows and virgins who had lived with Her; and She bequeathed that Her most pure body be buried near Jerusalem in Gethsemane, between the graves of Her righteous parents and St. Joseph, Her betrothed. Those who had assembled in lamentation She encouraged by words of love and blessing and consolation, promising them even after Her departure to Her Son and God not to leave them orphans, but to visit and to pray for all.

## THE ORTHODOX WORD

Suddenly an extraordinary light illuminated the house and the Lord Jesus Christ was seen by all with an assembly of angels and saints to descend to the bed of the Mother of God and receive Her Most Pure soul in His hands. The Most Holy Mother of God, *rejoicing inexpressibly and as if having fallen into sweet sleep, gave into His hand Her most holy soul. And thus in heavenly triumph Her soul was accompanied above, borne on the Lord's hands. The eyes of the Apostles too accompanied Her, having been found worthy to behold this most glorious vision.*

Then, according to the words of the holy Church, *the gates of heaven were lifted, the angels sang; meeting the heavenly Queen, the Cherubim stood behind with rejoicing and the Seraphim glorified Her with joy. The face of the Mother of God shone with the glory of Divine virginity, and from Her body was diffused a marvellous fragrance. With piety and fear kissing the most pure body, the holy Apostles were sanctified by contact with it, and feeling in their hearts the activity of Divine grace, they were filled with spiritual joy.*

The holy Apostles carried the bed on their shoulders to the place of burial, while sacred hymns were sung. A large, resplendent ring of cloud, resembling a crown, appeared in the air and accompanied the procession. The leaders of the Jews, inflamed with envy and vengeance towards all that reminded them of Christ, sent men who fell upon the procession in order to disrupt it, but the resplendent cloud surrounded the procession, blinding and scattering them. A Jewish priest, Athonios, threw himself in a rage on the couch of the Mother of God, but hardly had he touched it when *suddenly by heavenly judgement the audacious and inhuman hands were cut off and hung for some time from the bier. So as to grieve no one at Her departure from the world the Mother of God, by the prayers of the holy Apostles, granted healing both to the blinded enemies and to the audacious Athonios (who was later baptized).*

Having placed the most honorable body in a cave, the holy Apostles sealed the entrance with a large stone and for three days did not leave the tomb. On the third day the Apostle Thomas came, grievously mourning that he had not been found worthy of the final farewell with the Mother of God. Out of compassion the holy Apostles opened the cave to allow him to do reverence to the body. But when they rolled the stone away they found no body, but only Her garments, from which was diffused a marvellous fragrance; and they were convinced that the Mother of Life, although She had *died, yet rose, like Her Son, for eternal life, and that Her body, having been raised, was lifted up to heaven by Jesus Her*

## THE DORMITION

*Son and the Saviour of our souls.* The Church has always believed that the body of the Most Holy Mother of God was taken into heaven, and so she glorifies Her in her hymns: *Vanquished were the laws of nature in Thee, O pure Virgin; virginity is preserved in birthgiving, and life is united with death; remaining a Virgin after giving birth, and alive after death, Thou saiest always, O Mother of God, Thine inheritance.*

In the evening of the same day, the faithful were consoled by an appearance of the Mother of God, Whom they saw standing in the air, surrounded by Angelic powers and shining with inexpressible glory. The Church glorifies the Mother of God as More Honorable than the Cherubim and incomparably More Glorious than the Seraphim, Who now, as Queen, is at the right hand of the Son, and having taken the human race under Her protection, intercedes for it before the Lord's mercy.

The short sojourn of the body of the Mother of God in the tomb and Her transference soul and body into heaven is the reason why the Feast was called the "Dormition" or "sleep." In this Feast the Church teaches us that death is not an annihilation of our existence, but only a passage from earth to heaven, and she also refutes the error of heretics, such as the Collyridians of the 6th century, who denied the human nature of the Most Holy Virgin and affirmed as a result that She did not die.<sup>1</sup>

The Feast of the Dormition goes back to the earliest Christian ages; it was already universal in the 4th century, as is apparent from the testimony of Gregory of Tours, and especially from the fact that it is mentioned in all the most ancient calendars. In the 5th century stikhiras were written for the Feast by Anatolios, Patriarch of Constantinople, and in the 8th century two canons, which are ascribed to Cosmas of Maiuma and John Damascene. The date of the Feast, August 15, was fixed by decree of the Emperor Maurice (582-602).

*Note: The 14-day fast that precedes the Feast of the Dormition is second only to the Great Lent in strictness; during it, in addition to meat, eggs, and dairy products, fish also is prohibited. If the Feast itself falls on a Wednesday or Friday, of these foods only fish is permitted.*

1. A similar error has survived in the Church of Rome in the dogma of the "Immaculate Conception," which states that the Mother of God was born free of original sin. Since death is one of the consequences of original sin, one might expect the Latin Church to deny the death of the Mother of God, and in fact for Catholics the question is "open," and some theologians believe it likely that She did not die. Even in the Latin promulgation in 1950 of the dogma of the Assumption or bodily resurrection and ascension of the Mother of God -- which is itself an Orthodox doctrine -- it is not explicitly stated that She did die. The Orthodox doctrine makes it clear that, while She did not in fact sin, the Mother of God too was born subject to the consequences of original sin, one of which is death. (Ed. note.)

THE NEW MARTYRS  
OF THE TURKISH YOKE

ST. JOHN, THE NEW MARTYR

*WHO BORE WITNESS TO THE LORD  
DURING THE YEAR 1773*

*Commemorated October 21*

**J**OHN, THIS NEWLY-REVEALED martyr of Christ, was a native of the renowned Peloponnesus, that is, of the Morea, from the regions of Monembasia, from a village called Geraki. He was young in age, about fifteen years old, the son of a priest, and educated in the sacred letters. In the time of the captivity of the Morea, which came about in 1770, many Albanian Moslems came, imprisoning the Christians of that place. They also enslaved the martyr's village, putting his father to the sword, and taking John and his mother with them to Larissa. There they were sold two and three times, each one separately, but later both were sold together to a Thessalonian Hagarene who, since he did not have a son, desired very strongly, his wife no less than he, to have the blessed John as their adopted son. Therefore he would not cease from troubling the blessed John, daily attempting to pervert him from the faith of the Christians and to bring him to his own religion, using at times flatteries, promises of honor and position, and at other times threats of punishment and torture. But the martyr of Christ was firm and unshaken in his piety and valued all these things as nothing.

One day the Hagarene, being greatly wearied of having availed nothing from his urging the martyr to deny piety, was greatly angered and, placing the martyr before him and prodding him with his sword, took him as far as the courtyard of the mosque. There many Hagarenes gathered, who attempted violently to make the martyr become a Moslem by striking him with the sword, kicking him and threatening him with a pistol at his heart, and many other things did they do, but in vain did they labor, for the valiant John, without losing heart, would say, "I will not become a Moslem; I am a Christian, and I shall die a Christian." I will not mention the magical charms and satanic spells which the Hagarene's wife made to drive the blessed John out of his mind or to arouse in him the desiring of woman, and thereby to make him become a Moslem. But the grace of Christ protected him from all these things.

## ST. JOHN, THE NEW MARTYR

In the meantime the fast of the Lady Theotokos arrived, that which is called the "fifteen-in-August." And because John of blessed memory did not consent under any circumstances to eat non-lenten food and break the holy fast, he was locked by his master in a cellar. There for the fifteen days the Hagarene would at times hang John up and burn straw beneath him, or at other times would beat him with the flat of his sword all over his body, in order to force him to eat of their abominable foods. But the valiant one of Christ, imitating the Three Children who did not consent to eat of the impure food of King Nabuchodonosor, and also the Holy Maccabees who did not consent to eat pork because it was prohibited by Divine law, unto the end did not consent, not even so much as to taste these foods, but invoking the name and the assistance of the Lady Theotokos in Whose honor this fast is observed, he preferred rather to be put to death than to break the holy fast. His master, seeing that he did not submit, left him hungry for two and three days at a time. His mother, standing near her son and seeing him exhausted from the sword beating, the hangings, the fasting and all the other hardships, exhorted him to eat, saying, "Eat, my son, of these foods so that you will not die, and God and the All-holy One will forgive you because you do not do so with your own will, but of necessity. Pity me, also, your poor mother, and do not will to die an untimely death, to leave me unconsoled in this strange land, for having you it seems as though I am not in slavery."

The martyr, strengthening his mother's weakness, spoke thus to her, "Why do you act thus, O mother? Why do you not imitate the Patriarch Abraham, who out of love for his Creator was willing to sacrifice his only son? Are you weeping on my account alone? I am the son of a priest, and I must keep the laws and customs of our Holy Church better than the sons of the laymen, for if we do not keep the lesser commandments, how can we keep the greater?" Finally his master, seeing that he could not prevail upon John to abandon the faith of Christ or to break his fast, was greatly enraged and dealt him a fatal stab in the heart. After two days John expired and received the martyr's crown. While dying, the martyr directed his mother, in the same manner as the all-virtuous Joseph had directed the Jews, to remain and exhume his relics, and to take them and go to his country. Which command his mother fulfilled, and now his fragrant relics are found in his village, firstly to support piety and faith, and secondly to shame and censure those Christians who are slaves to their bellies and who do not keep the fasts handed down by the Church of Christ, to Whom be glory and power unto the ages. Amen.

# ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

## THE DEATH OF A SAINT

*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.*      I Cor. 2: 9

The unutterable joy and glory of the Kingdom of Heaven, the goal of the Christian life, is glimpsed in part even on earth by those who live the life of grace in the Church of Christ. The vision of Heaven is normally clearest, and the life of grace most intensely felt, on the Radiant Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, with devout reception of Holy Communion. Yet there are times when God grants a special grace to His people, as for instance in connection with a Wonderworking Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, or with one of His chosen saints.

As those who were present and participated will readily testify, such a special grace was revealed in connection with the recent repose and burial of Archbishop John (Maximovitch) of San Francisco and Western America, of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Everything connected with these events was extraordinary. First of all, the death itself was extraordinary. It occurred in Seattle, where His Eminence had gone for a few days accompanying the miraculous Kursk Icon of the Mother of God, at 3:50 p.m. on Saturday, July 2 (June 19, O.S.). The death was sudden, yet on

this day after celebrating the Divine Liturgy the Archbishop had spent three hours in the altar praying -- which was rare even for this true man of prayer -- and in fact had only shortly before left the church to rest for a few minutes in his room next door when the fatal seizure occurred. Those who ran to his room when they heard him fall report that he died immediately thereafter, peacefully and without pain. These circumstances, together with statements which he had made beforehand, one of them the day before he left for Seattle, make it quite clear that he knew in advance of his approaching death and had prepared himself for it, even as have the great saints throughout the history of the Church of Christ.

Scarcely twenty-four hours later the body arrived in the San Francisco Cathedral which he himself had completed. The body was met by the Cathedral clergy as it had been when the Archbishop was alive, and there began a vigil that was to last for just over four days. Every day after the morning and evening services a solemn *panikhida* was served, and the rest of the day until midnight the Gospel was read uninterruptedly by

## ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

the diocesan clergy. After midnight there was a touching scene: the servers and readers of the Cathedral read the Psalter the whole night, and so the Archbishop was surrounded in death by the young people whom he loved so much, keeping a last vigil with him. This whole time there was a constant procession of people come to bid farewell to their beloved Archpastor.

At each service before the open coffin a sermon by one of the attending hierarchs offered spiritual instruction to the large crowds attending. On Sunday, July 3, Bishop Nektary of Seattle, Vicar of the Archdiocese, invited all to kiss the "relics" of the Archbishop; this term, properly applied to the body of a deceased hierarch, was understood by all to have a more specific application: to the body of a saint. On July 4 Bishop Sava of Edmonton called the Archbishop "blessed" and, more boldly yet, "a wonder-worker in his own lifetime," and disclosed that he himself already prayed to him as to a saint. On July 6 Archbp. Averky of Holy Trinity Monastery spoke of the Archbishop's ascetic life, and especially of his extraordinary "battle with sleep" which had caused him *never once to lie down* in all his forty years as a monk, but only to take an hour or two of rest nightly in an uncomfortable position, either sitting up or bent over on the floor praying before icons -- a marvel in an age of general spiritual decline. Fittingly, the Archbishop also died in a sitting position, and in fact had expressed the desire to be

buried in this position, as were Byzantine hierarchs, but unfortunately this could not be done. On July 7 Metropolitan Philaret, just arrived from New York, noted the Archbishop's "authentic Christian asceticism" and cited him as an "example of true ascetic steadfastness and strictness" unheard of in these evil days.

From the first day of the vigil it was apparent that this was to be no ordinary farewell to the departed, not even for a hierarch. There was a sense of being present at the unfolding of a mystery: the mystery of holiness. Those present were devoutly convinced that they had come to bury a saint.

In all these days there was an extraordinary outpouring of love. Everyone suddenly discovered himself an orphan, for to each the Archbishop had been the one person most near, most understanding, most loving. Hardened enemies, and there were such, came to beg forgiveness in death of a man who had held no ill-will for them while living.

The vigil was climaxed by the funeral service itself, which was held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 7 (June 24, OS). There were present some five hierarchs (in addition to those mentioned above, there was Archbp. Leonty of Santiago, Chile), 24 priests, innumerable servers, and over 1500 faithful who overflowed the large Cathedral and whose number did not diminish for six hours. The fervor of those who attended the long service which the Church of Christ appoints at the repose

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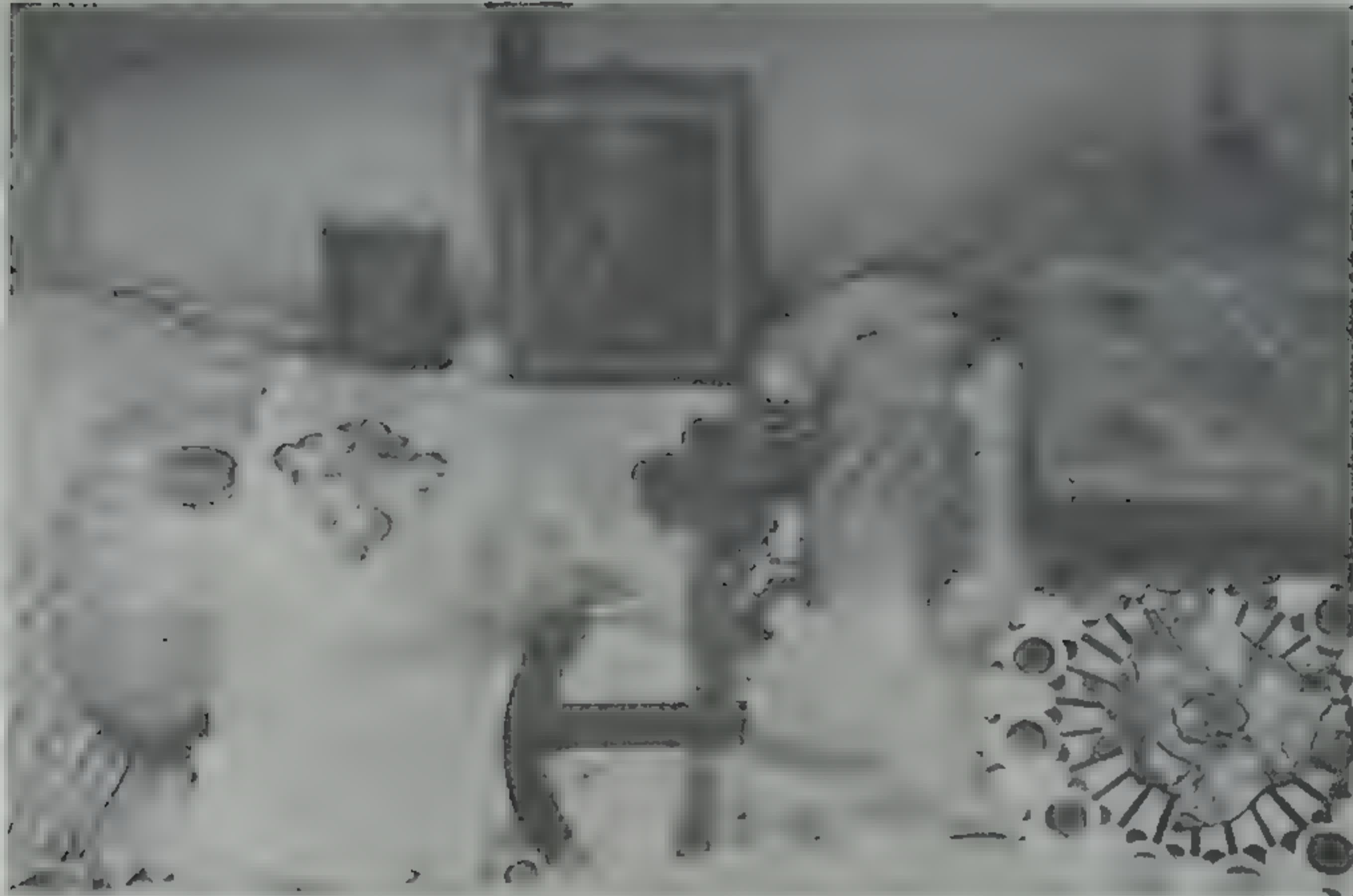
of her hierarchs has probably been rarely equalled in this century; it could best be compared with the fervor that is sometimes manifested at the services of Passion Week and Easter, and the feeling was indeed similar. With sorrow at the passing of this man of God who had been a loving father to a flock of unnumbered thousands in China, in Europe, and throughout the world, was mingled an anticipation of joy at the gaining of something even greater: a heavenly intercessor. As many, perhaps, as prayed for the repose of his soul had already begun to pray directly to him, that he might continue, now in his heavenly abode, his fatherly protection of them. Those who had been closest to him put icons, crosses, flowers, even infants -- and several hierarchs their *panagias* -- into the coffin, in order to receive them back after contact with the holy body, which even in its sixth day of exposure, without embalming, showed no signs of decay. How appropriate it was that the Cathedral in which he should end his lifelong service to the Church of Christ, and in which he was to find his final resting place, should be dedicated to *The Joy of All Who Sorrow*.

The funeral service was followed by the final kissing of the relics by all present and a procession three times around the Cathedral, the bier being carried by the orphans whom the Archbishop had rescued and raised in Shanghai. This was the culminating point of these solemn

days, and it was a veritable triumphal procession. It was as if one were attending, no longer the funeral of a deceased hierarch, but the uncovering of the holy relics of a newly-proclaimed saint. One of the attending hierarchs noted the similarity to the procession with the Shroud of the Lord on the eve of Passion Saturday. The body was interred in a small basement chapel under the altar, the last "eternal memory" being sung only after 1 a.m. Within four days, in an unprecedented action, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors amended the City law to permit the burial of prelates in their cathedrals, and the resting place of the Archbishop became final.

Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov, in his "Thoughts on Death," has written: "Have you ever seen the body of a righteous man whose soul has departed? There is no stench from him; one does not fear to approach him. At his burial sorrow is dissolved in a kind of incomprehensible joy." And this, according to Bishop Ignaty, is a sign that "the deceased has obtained mercy and grace with the Lord." All of this was felt by those who devoutly accompanied Archbishop John to his final repose.

But now, when this event and experience of a lifetime have been described, the story of Archbishop John has not even begun to be told. He has already been glorified in the hearts and prayers of those who knew him, and there is daily pilgrimage to his tomb. The



The holy relics of Archbishop John; the face is covered, as is required for monks.

The large icon is of the Archbishop's patron saint, St. John of Tobolsk, who was also his distant relative and bore the same surname of Maximovitch.

The faithful kissed the Gospel, the mitre, and the Archbishop's hands.

faithful were several times reminded during these days of the promise which St. Seraphim of Sarov made before his death, to hear the prayers of those who would come to his grave and speak to him, as if to a living person, of their needs and sorrows; and they were encouraged to do the same at the tomb of Archbishop John. From the time of the funeral service not a day has passed but that some of the Archbishop's spiritual children have come to "speak to Vladi-ka," to read the Psalter that is constantly open before his grave, and to seek his intercession.

And if the life of this righteous man was truly pleasing to God -- as we cannot but believe that it was -- his remembrance will not be merely local. He was, as one of the priests closest to him called him, "an ascetic-saint of universal significance." For truly his life was the phenomenon of our times: the life of one who was, in effect, a pillar-saint who yet lived in the midst of the world and was accessible to all, and through whose prayers miracles were performed.

To those who have experienced these days, nearness to a saint has brought understanding of and reinspired devotion

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to the saints of God, whom our beloved Vladika himself so greatly venerated. It is they who offer the proof and the example of a life devoted entirely to God. In an age when coldness and carelessness are causing even Orthodox Christians to lose the savor of genuine Christianity, the death of a saint was a sign and a

revelation from Above, renewing in us that contact with the heavenly realms without which there is no spiritual life.

— *The first complete Life of Archbishop John will appear in the November-December issue of THE ORTHODOX WORD.*



## A PILGRIMAGE TO THE ORTHODOX HOLY PLACES OF AMERICA

### *THE SECOND PILGRIMAGE*

PILGRIMAGING WAS ONCE a practice of ardent and devout Christians in quest of enriching their spiritual experience. It was done to venerate a saint or a miraculous icon, or it might accompany an act of contrition. Travelling as a rule was, of course, by foot, thus involving in itself considerable labor and even hardship. Pilgrims would depart from the shrine deeply rewarded, having left behind their worldly accumulations, their hearts cleansed to begin their Christian life anew...

This practice has unfortunately died out. One no longer sees a wandering caravan of pilgrims, with road-staves, solemnly singing sacred hymns of other-worldly hope. Modern "tourists" in their flashing automobiles, with clicking cameras, are entirely deprived of the spirit of the pilgrim who "hungered for God and His righteousness."

In the sunny land of William Penn, where old fashioned Quakers and bearded Amish still ride their horses and buggies amidst rolling hills and winding country roads, nests a Russian monastery. This historic landmark, the first Orthodox monastery in the New World, sprang up as a witness to Russia's deep devotion to monasticism and to the need of monasticism for people far from their own culture who were being transposed to the tempo of the Western world.

...As you walk eight miles from Carbondale (not far from Scranton) and approach the monastery grounds, you behold a pond, a barn, in the center a typical Russian archway leading to the monastery... Inside, on an elevation, you see the bell tower (cover) and the main church dedicated to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk...



# SAINT TIKHON'S MONASTERY

NEAR SOUTH CANAAN IN PENNSYLVANIA

As a bird without wings,  
as a soldier without arms,—  
so is a Christian without prayer.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk.

**T**IKHON, THE FUTURE Patriarch of All Russia and a guardian angel of the Russian Church from 1917 right up to today, was made Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska in 1899 and sent to San Francisco, where the diocesan see was located. During his eight years in America he was destined to establish several major institutions to aid the growth of Orthodoxy on this continent. He transferred the diocesan see to the East Coast, where the majority of Orthodox people had become concentrated, opened a seminary in Minneapolis, and consecrated the first monastery in America. Out of reverence for him, this monastery was named in honor of his patron saint, Tikhon of Zadonsk.

St. Tikhon being the patron of the monastery, prayers are sung to him daily in the chapel, and one would expect his presence to be more intimately felt there than elsewhere. One does not, however, detect any special devotion to the Saint there. There are no particularly-revered icons of him, no object in some way related to him, no icon or *Life* of him that may be purchased on the monastery grounds. Actually, the name of Patriarch Tikhon is more revered and his memory much more vivid.

The foundation of the monastery, together with a badly-needed orphanage,<sup>1</sup> grew out of a request of the young Hieromonk Arseny (later a bishop in Canada) at the Sixth Convention of the Orthodox Mutual Aid Society. The members of this Society were to find a suitable locality and arrange the finances. Land was easily found almost in the heart of the Orthodox settlement; conditions were ideal for a work of enlightenment among Orthodox people. Arseny was appointed rector-builder of the monastery, but at first he could visit it only on some week-days. Two novices lived near the orphanage, which was more quickly begun. It took a whole year to erect the first monastery buildings.

1. Incidentally, the only two Orthodox orphanages in America are both dedicated to St. Tikhon, the other being in San Francisco, founded by the late Archbp. John in Shanghai.

*Official portrait of  
Patriarch Tikhon  
1917*



The monastery church was consecrated by Archbishop Tikhon on May 17 (30), 1906, in the presence of two other bishops, many clergymen, and a multitude of faithful. Fr. Arseny Chagovtsov, the builder and head of both the monastery and the orphanage, was made abbot at that same service. Since then every Memorial Day has been a great feast day. That whole summer Vladika Tikhon spent in the monastery, taking an active part in its daily life. Most remarkable were his humility and simplicity. Once, for example, during a meal he was served boiled potatoes which had been peeled, while those given to the brothers had not been. The Archbishop gently refused to partake of them.

The first St. Tikhon's day was solemnly celebrated and in the evening the first monks were tonsured.

Before Bishop Tikhon's arrival, the path of Orthodoxy in America had already been well established. It had just seen the great pastoral activity of Bishop Nicholai<sup>1</sup> and was in the midst of the great missionary labor of returning large Carpatho-Russian settlements from Uniatism to Orthodoxy under the leadership of *Archpriest Alexy Tovt*, who continued in the New World the movement started in Russia by the righteous *Fr. John Naumovich*. Fr. Tovt, himself a Uniat priest, had returned to Orthodoxy with his parish of 400 souls in Minneapolis, and by the time Bishop Tikhon arrived he had won numerous parishes to Orthodoxy, primarily in Pennsylvania. Fr. Tovt, having produced a good crop on the Lord's harvest, was laid to rest at St. Tikhon's Monastery. A small stone chapel was built over his grave, which is just behind the altar of the main church (see sketch on page 114).

The constructive beginning of Orthodoxy in America -- of which the foundation of St. Tikhon's Monastery, as also of the first seminaries in America, was an important part -- was an echo of Imperial Russia's spiritual vitality, which was then at its height; but it was soon to be cut short by the Russian Revolution.

For St. Tikhon's, too, its most inspiring days were gone, and soon it, together with the majority of American parishes, recognized the Soviet-controlled Moscow Patriarchate. Since that time its fate has been bound up with that of the American Metropolia, which has not in principle ceased to recognize the Soviet Patriarchate.

Today the monastery grounds are randomly set with various buildings which bear no particular agreement in style. Besides the main church and the bell tower there are several chapels, the most distant one, on an adjacent farm two miles away, being dedicated to St. Herman of Valaam.

The Seminary is separated from the monastery; it prepares young clergymen mostly for local parishes and has given America more clergy than any other Orthodox seminary. The monastery houses a few, mostly elderly monks. There is a household garden, and formerly there were cows. There used to be a printing press. A book store is managed by the monastery; its catalogue may be obtained from: *St. Tikhon's Religious Center, South Canaan, Pennsylvania*.

St. Tikhon's Monastery is a historic monument -- and that is its position among the Holy Places of America. It is a reminder of the promising beginning of Orthodoxy in America which, with a few notable exceptions, has not since then regained its early scope and fervor.

1. See Jon Gregerson, *The Beginnings of Holy Orthodoxy in San Francisco, 1859-1900*, soon to be published.

*Next issue: A Pilgrimage to Novo-Diveyev Convent near Spring Valley, N. Y.*



Archpriest Alexy Tovt

Right: Archway entrance to the monastery. The inscription reads:

BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES  
IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.



Below: The monastery cemetery, the graves not all in the full Orthodox tradition with cross. The chapel at right is the work of Architect Verbovskoy.



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